

Deep Sea Minerals Media Fact Sheet



Commercial interest in the deep sea minerals of the Pacific Islands region is increasing as a result of global demand for metals, improved mining technology and several successful exploration ventures.

The Deep Sea Minerals Project is a collaboration between the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and the European Union. Initiated in 2011, this pioneering work is helping Pacific Island governments to improve the governance and management of their deep sea minerals resources in accordance with international law, with particular attention to the protection of the marine environment and securing equitable financial arrangements for the benefit of Pacific people.

There are 15 participating Pacific Island countries: the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

While no deep sea mining has commenced in the region, five countries (Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands) have issued exploration licenses within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). So far Papua New Guinea is the only Pacific nation to issue a mining license.

Development in this emerging industry needs to be balanced against potential environmental and social impacts and the appropriate management of revenue streams.

As one of its key result areas, the SPC- implemented project aims to assist Pacific Island governments in the formulation of national policy, review and drafting of legislation and regulations to ensure responsible governance and careful management of deep sea mineral resources.

Pacific countries that have enacted deep sea minerals legislation are:

- Cook Islands (Seabed Minerals Act 2009)
- Fiji (International Marine Minerals Decree 2013)
- Tonga (Seabed Minerals Act 2014)
- Tuvalu (Seabed Minerals Act 2014)

Contact us

The Deep Sea Minerals Project is managed by SPC's Geoscience Division based in Suva, Fiji.

For more information on the project and deep sea minerals, visit <http://gsd.spc.int/dsm> email us at dsmproject@spc.int or contact us via phone (+679 338 1377)

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What are deep sea minerals?

These are mineral deposits that occur on the seafloor and/or under the seabed in deeper parts of the ocean, that may be extracted economically.

There are three major deep sea mineral deposit types (seafloor massive sulphides, cobalt-rich crusts and manganese nodules) that occur in the EEZ of Pacific Island countries.

These deposits can have high concentrations of metals such as copper, gold, silver, zinc, lead, cobalt, nickel and platinum. They may also have quantities of rare earth elements (REEs).

Such minerals and REEs are used in jewellery, mobile phones, batteries, and other technology devices.